
WATCH YOUR STEP!!

While there is all kinds of traction-subway noise and a lot of now-you-see-it-now-you-don't funnywork going on in Chicago City Hall and Chicago newspapers, the real trick of handing the traction companies what they want will be turned in Springfield. That's the talk now in council chamber lobbies.

Aldermen shy at being quoted. A dozen or more are already well worked up about the 50-year and 30-year franchise proposals, the overloaded capitalization on which the elevated roads are to be merged with the surface lines, the shift from 5 to 6 per cent returns, the 7 and 9-cent fares, and the general cockiness of New York engineers known as Wall street voices coming along and telling Chicago where to get off the cars. These aldermen are studying the traction-subway report, what there is of it, and when the enabling bills are up before the legislature a few weeks from now they will be heard from.

Meanwhile, the referendum is getting respectable. From officials never before particularly eloquent on the wisdom of the people to pass on their own problems, now comes firm demand for the referendum. Ask Walter Fisher, the lawyer who solved all our traction troubles in 1907, or ask Ald. Henry Capitain, chairman of council transportation committee, and they will tell you the referendum is a fine little instrument of democracy and ought to be used at every turn of the traction dickering.

"Every important feature of the deal ought to be submitted to a referendum," said Capitain. "The clauses of the ordinance should say not 'may, but 'must' be submitted to a referendum.

"Home rule of utilities, consolidation of the elevated and surface lines, abolishment of frontage consents—

each of these ought to go to the people for a vote.

"There should be no change accomplished in the powers of the city council except by a referendum vote. The combined traction companies, whatever form they are to be in, must be under control of the council.

"The first consideration is the car rider. As we look back on the 1907 ordinances now we see that they did not give full justice to the car rider. It is the car rider, the man, woman or child who pays the nickel fare who piled up the \$30,000,000 traction fund. The car riders have paid for millions of dollars' worth of street paving. Pres. Busby of the surface lines tells me \$30,000,000 has been spent for street paving since 1907. I have not verified this figure. I am sure that \$8,000,000 worth of traction pavements laid by the traction companies have been paid for by the car riders' nickels. The city ought to pay for pavements and let the car rider's nickel pay for service."

ALL 'ROUND TOWN

"I notice Mr. Busby is getting gray and grizzled," said a council transportation committee alderman. "Running a street car company in Chicago seems to wear a man. Two years ago, Busby looked like a lawyer just out of college. People talked about what a young-looking fellow he was. Now he looks like he had been in the trenches of a battle on the Somme.

Since the recent City Hall office raids of State's Att'y Hoyne a policeman has been stationed outside the door of Mayor Thompson's office. He looks military, erect, alert—a regular sentinel, 'doin' his dooty, ooty, ooty."

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 Policeman Isaac Terisian, 29 years on force, resigned because he was transferred to South Chicago.